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More thoughts on citing Swedish records – Why should I???

BY ELISABETH THORSELL

By now one hopes that it is no longer necessary to explain why it is important to cite one's sources. But, just in case, here are a few reasons.

1. You do it for your own needs; you never know if you need to back-track and see who else was listed on that page in the cl. survey. And that is much easier to do if you have made proper citations.
2. You do it for the sake of the ones that continue your research. How are they to know if you had looked in this or that record, unless you have made notes of the sources?
3. You do it for the people you wish to share your research with. During the years you read the records for Lommaryd, you probably will meet with others who have roots in the same parish, and it is much easier to compare results if you have the proper citations.

We agree about this, don't we?

So, how do you cite sources? You should do it in such a way that it is possible for anyone to trace the document where you found that specific piece of evidence that showed that your Johan was indeed the son of Nils in Lillegården.

Swedish church records

The Swedish archives have organized the church records in the same way since they started to care for them in the late 1600s. Each parish archive was supposed to keep the same kind of records as every other parish in the country, according to the Church Law of 1686.

The main categories were clerical surveys or household examination records (*husförhörlängder*), removal books (*flyttningslängder*), birth and baptism records (*födelse- och dop-*

böcker), banns and marriage records (*lysnings- och vigselböcker*), and death and burial records (*död- och begravningsböcker*).

Each category of books were given a code letter (Swedish: *signum*) and then a volume figure.

These letters are:

AI = clerical surveys

B = removal records

C = birth and baptism records

E = banns and marriage records

F = death and burial records

If a birth, death, or marriage has been found in the chronologically kept records it might not be necessary to write a long citation. You can just make a note for yourself, that you have found this event in the right book. But if you have found a death date in a different source, like a *bo-uppteckning*, then you must do a full citation.

Book Lommaryd AI:2 thus is the second volume of the clerical surveys for Lommaryd. When you have found that your ancestors lived at Degla farm, on page 234 in Lommaryd AI:2, you can cite the source for that family as "Lommaryd (1789-1791)AI:2, p. 234," or just "Lommaryd (1789-1791) AI:2:234."

These days many of us use the services of the internet providers, mainly the Swedish company *Arkiv Digital*, that have newly photographed pictures of the records in color.

Another provider is *Ancestry.com*, that a few years back bought the Swedish company *Genline*. Genline scanned the Mormon microfilms, that were filmed in black-and-white in the 1950s mainly. Since then the archives have changed many of the "names" of the volumes, so descriptions on Ancestry might not be correct any longer. Also they have kept the old GID-numbers as identifi-

cation for the pictures. That GID-number is quite worthless as a source citation, as they can only be deciphered by other Ancestry users.

SVAR, a branch of the Swedish National Archives (*Riksarkivet*), also provides the church records in black-and-white, but has the modern volume "names".

If you are using the microfilms of the Family History Library, you should add FHL Film 135601. So then the citation says "Lommaryd (1789-1791) AI:2:234, FHL Film 135601."

However, if you are going to work in Swedish archives, you will have no help of the FHL film numbers, as they are virtually unknown in Sweden.

Those Swedish code letters, mentioned above, appear on the first page of every volume, and on the same page you can see what years the volume covers. It is a good idea to add those years to your citation, as you have already seen in this article.

The good thing about adding the years for the volume is that when the archive that has the original books for some reason changes the volume number, you still know what years you are looking for.

Many of the modern computer programs have good facilities for citations, but if they do not fit your requirements, you can always write a text note.

More reading:

Mills, Elizabeth Shown, *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., Baltimore (2007).

Ms. Mills also has a very useful web site, see page 30. She is also on Facebook.

Ed: s note: This is an updated article from SAG 2004/3.